

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03065 281645Z
ACTION SS-25

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P R 281615Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4410
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO

S E C R E T BEIRUT 3065

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI MOPS LE IS SY
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON

REF: STATE 148797

1. SAW FONMIN BOUTROS AT MINISTRY DEFENSE 1300 LOCAL
JUNE 28. CONVEYED TO HIM NATURE OF REPRESENTATIONS
WE MAKING TO ISRAELIS AND SYRIANS ON SITUATION SOUTH
LEBANON. HE VERY APPRECIATIVE, BUT ASKED AGAIN WHETHER
WE THOUGHT ISRAELIS, ALTHOUGH THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE
TERRITORIAL DESIGNS, MIGHT UNDERTAKE POLICE ACTION IN
SOUTH LEBANON AND OCCUPY TYRE. I SAID THIS STORY
HAD BEEN SPREAD BY DANY CHAMOUN, AMONG OTHERS,
WHO ALLEGEDLY GOT IT FROM A CHAMOUNIST CONTACT
WITH THE ISRAELIS. ANYTHING WAS POSSIBLE, OF COURSE,
BUT WE HAD RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM ISRAELIS THEY
HAD NO INTENTIONS TAKE MILITARY SWIPE AT LEBANON
AND, IF THEY DID, I THOUGHT LAST PEOPLE THEY WOULD

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TELL ABOUT IT IN ADVANCE WOULD BE CHAMOUNISTS OR OTHER
LEBANESE. BOUTROS SAID HE HAD REACHED SAME CONCLUSION
BUT WAS GLAD TO KNOW I FELT SAME WAY.

2. WE TALKED BRIEFLY ABOUT SITUATION IN SOUTH
AND BOUTROS ASKED WHETHER ISRAELIS CONTROLLED
CHRISTIANS OR CHRISTIANS WERE PUSHING ISRAELIS INTO

FIGHT. I SAID CHRISTIANS MIGHT BE DRAGGING ISRAELIS INTO FIRING ENGAGEMENTS, BUT I DID NOT THINK THEY COULD PUSH THEM.

3. AFTER MEETING WITH BOUTROS, I HAD LUNCH WITH SUNNI LEADER SAEB SALAM AT HIS HOUSE IN BASTA. SALAM ASKED WHAT WE THOUGHT OF PROPOSALS NOW BEING DISCUSSED FOR CEASE-FIRE IN SOUTH, WHICH WOULD INVOLVE PULLBACK BY EVERYBODY. I SAID ON SURFACE IT WAS POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT, BUT QUESTION WHICH IMMEDIATELY CAME TO MIND WAS WHETHER FATAH AND SAIQA COULD CONTROL REJECTIONISTS AND LEBANESE LEFTISTS. SALAM SAID FATAH CLAIMED IT COULD CONTROL REJECTIONISTS. CERTAINLY THERE WAS NO QUESTION THAT IF FATAH AND SAIQA WERE ALLOWED TO GET TOGETHER THEY COULD CONTROL REJECTIONISTS, (WE ARE NOT SO SURE), BUT QUESTION WAS WHETHER SYRIANS WOULD LET THEM DO SO. SALAM SAID HE HAD SEEN AL-ASAD ON JUNE 26, AND LATTER HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT SITUATION IN SOUTH BUT HAD SONE SO IN MANNER INDICATING THAT HIS REAL CONCERNS WERE LARGER SYRIAN OBJECTIVES IN LEBANON. SALAM SAID HE FRANKLY UNCERTAIN WHAT SYRIANS' INTENTIONS WERE. HE KNEW THEY WANTED TO CONTROL LEBANON AND THAT THEY WERE WORKING THROUGH GRASSROOTS CONTACTS TO DO SO. THEY WOULD FAIL, OF COURSE, BECAUSE LEBANESE WERE WISE TO SUCH
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TACTICS. NEVERTHELESS, THIS SYRIAN OUTLOOK COLORED SYRIAN PERCEPTIONS OF THE SOUTH AND WOULD AFFECT THE POSSIBILITY OF REACHING CEASE-FIRE THERE. IF SYRIANS WERE FOR IT, IT COULD BE DONE. IF THEY WERE OPPOSED, IT WOULD NOT WORK.

4. SALAM THEN ASKED IF WE WOULD USE OUR INFLUENCE IN SUPPORT OF SUCH A CEASE-FIRE. I SAID I THOUGHT WE WOULD PROVIDED THERE WAS SOME SERIOUS PROPOSITION TO SUPPORT. DID HE HAVE ONE TO OFFER? HE SAID NOT YET, BUT HE HAD BEEN ASKED TO WEIGH IN (PRESUMABLY BY FATAH) AND HE SPECIFICALLY WANTED TO KNOW WHETHER WE WOULD USE OUR INFLUENCE WITH LEBANESE FRONT. I SAID WE WOULD IF WE HAD SOMETHING SERIOUS TO DISCUSS WITH THEM AND IT LOOKED LIKE A WORKABLE PROPOSITION. THEN NOTED THAT WHILE HIS QUESTIONS WERE ABOUT SYRIANS, MINE WERE ABOUT FATAH. THEIR INTENTIONS NOT CLEAR TO ME. SALAM SAID IT WAS EVIDENT FATAH WOULD LIKE TO FIND WAY TO STABILIZE SITUATION. HE DID NOT EXPLAIN WHY.
PARKER

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CINCEUR.

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NNN

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